

# THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIP FRACTURE

In the Clinic  
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## What is hip fracture?

- A break near the top of the long bone running through the thigh (the femur), near the hip joint.
- Pain after hip fracture may be felt in the groin or buttock, and possibly the thigh or knee.
- Flexing or rotating the hip will cause discomfort.

## What causes hip fracture?

- The fracture usually occurs after a fall or some other trauma.
- Most hip fractures occur in people older than 65 years, as aging bones become gradually weaker and more susceptible to breaks.
- Osteoporosis is the main risk factor.
- About 70% of hip fractures occur in women.

## How is it treated?

- An x-ray or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is used to confirm diagnosis.
- Surgery is usually required for repair.
- The procedure is based on the location and extent of the fracture, patient age, and the surgeon's expertise.
- In rare cases, treatment is nonsurgical. Nonsurgical treatment is usually reserved for patients who are too sick to have surgery or those who were unable to walk before the injury.

## What are common complications?

- It is important to start moving around soon after surgery to speed recovery and reduce complications.
- It is usually necessary to use a walker, cane, or crutches and to participate in physical therapy for several months after surgery.
- Muscle deterioration and weakness can lead to permanent loss of mobility.
- Patients on bed rest are at increased risk for infections, bed sores, pneumonia, blood clots, and nutritional wasting.



- People who have one hip fracture are significantly more likely to have another.

## How can hip fracture be prevented?

- Keep bones strong by eating a nutritious diet with adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D.
- Be physically active to help maintain bone strength.
- If you have osteoporosis, talk to your doctor about medicines that treat or prevent bone loss.
- Prevent falls by remedying household hazards like slippery floors, poor lighting, and cluttered walkways.
- Stairways should have handrails.
- Review your medicines with your doctor and take only as directed.
- Wear well-fitting, low-heeled shoes, and use walking aids correctly.

## For More Information

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00305>  
Information on preventing broken hips from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007386.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007386.htm)  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000168.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000168.htm)  
Information on hip fracture surgeries and on postsurgical care from the National Institutes of Health's MedlinePLUS.

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/osteoporosis/toc.html>  
Patient information on osteoporosis from NIHSeniorHealth

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